

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL PREACHER.

No. 9, Vol. XXXI.]

SEPTEMBER, 1857.

[Whole No. 369.]

SERMON DCCXVIII.

BY REV. M. L. P. THOMPSON, D. D.,

PASTOR OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BUFFALO.

THE GREAT PROMISE.

"And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—MATT. xxviii. 20.

(PREACHED BEFORE THE AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,
AT PROVIDENCE, R. I., SEPTEMBER 8, 1857.)

THE natural process of our minds, on reading this text, is first to consider Jesus—to look with adoring wonder to Him from whose lips such remarkable and gracious words proceeded: then our thoughts are turned to the little company of faithful and favored men to whom Jesus spoke, hearing not for themselves alone, but for us also, and for all that should come after them, having like faith to theirs; and finally, we ponder the words, and try to understand their meaning, and to get the weight of them on our hearts.

Who speaks? To whom does he speak? What does he say? And what should be the influence on us of his words?

Such, brethren, shall be the plan of my discourse. I desire to speak to you *as* on my knees, as it seems to me, Jesus would have me speak, and, as well as I am able, *the things* which he would have me speak, and which he himself would speak if he were personally present in our assembly.

It is not by hearing *new things* that we are to have our missionary spirit improved; but by gaining a deeper impression and sense of *old things*. We do not need that a dealing should be had with our natural intellects, but with our spiritual understanding and our hearts.

It is my becoming and proper office, as your preacher, therefore, to seek to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance,

that you may be mindful," when this hour is past, not of my words, but "of the words which were spoken before" by the Lord himself.

The eleven were in Galilee, waiting for Jesus in a certain "mountain where he had appointed them." In due time their faith and patience were rewarded. They saw him and worshipped him. "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

It has been suggested by some that these words may not have been spoken by our Lord on that mountain in Galilee; that Matthew, in the brief conclusion of his Gospel, recorded them without necessarily implying that they were spoken at that particular place or time, and that the real scene and occasion when they were uttered was in the Mount of Olives, near to Bethany, on that more interesting and awful occasion when, having given his final instructions to the disciples, "he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and while he blessed them, was parted from them, and taken up into heaven."

There might possibly be something gained, through the influence of association, by adopting this view, and regarding the words of the text with the words of that loving benediction which were yet upon the Saviour's lips when he was taken up, as the *last* words which were uttered by him previous to his ascension. What is mainly important, however, is to prove that Jesus uttered such words, and whether on a mountain of Galilee or in Olivet; whether some days before he ascended, or only a moment before, is comparatively of little consequence to us.

Having laid his commandment on the disciples to go and disciple all nations, Jesus added this for their assurance, "And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

I. Let us, then, consider who speaks—*Jesus*. What we want, my brethren, is to fix upon our minds a full impression of the true *divinity* of this gracious utterance. We want to feel that it is no less a being than very God who speaks to us, else the words lose their power, and our interest in them ceases. We want this voice—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," to come to us clear and definite, and unmistakable from the highest glory. We want it to fall upon our ears and upon our hearts from the very throne of the kingdom. It is not enough for us to know that Jesus is God, as we know ten thousand other things by a mere intellectual perception of them, which fails to bring them nigh to us, and to invest them with real and substantial forms. We want to know it in the living consciousness of our

inmost souls, as we are sure the eleven knew it when they heard him speak, when they stood there on the mount, and he talked with them, and when they saw him ascend up into heaven, until a cloud received him out of their sight. They could say, in their epistles to the churches, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the word of life, (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,) that which we have seen and heard declared we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." That is what we want, fellowship with them—fellowship with them in the knowledge of that peculiar experience which they had as companions of the Lord and eye-witnesses of his glory. We want to know and to feel that Jesus is God, having life in himself, and able to give life to as many as he will : that "it is even he that sitteth on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in ; that bringeth the princes to nothing, and that maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." What we want, before the words of Jesus in the text can fill us with joy as they should, and with strength and confidence, and courage as they should, and constrain us to all holy obedience as they should, is the grace to get upon our souls the full power of that other utterance of his, as we are sure it came upon the soul of his servant John in Patmos : "I am the first and the last ; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death."

If Jesus be not God, if he be not the Almighty, if he be not Lord of all things, Lord of heaven and Lord of earth, then there can be no binding force in his commandment, nor any ground of confidence to undertake so mighty an enterprise. We need the full sense of his divine authority, and his divine power, to constrain our consciences, and to strengthen our hearts and our hands. What less than this could have been availing for the first disciples ? What less can be availing for us ? Disciple all nations ! Make the faith and worship of Jesus universal ! Are we with this Gospel to subdue the world, until "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father ;" until the kingdoms of the world shall become his kingdoms, and he shall reign from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof ? Is this the commandment ? And shall it be undertaken ? Can it be accomplished ? Never, if Jesus be not God ; but if Jesus be *very* God, then *yes*. If Jesus be God, it is his right to require this of his servants ; and if he be God, the work can and will be accomplished.

JESUS IS GOD. His resurrection from the dead has crowned

him. This, in the thought of his own mind, is the very *ground and reason* of the commandment. "He came and spake unto them, saying—All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations." Because I am God, and have authority to send you, Go. Because I am the Almighty, and have power to prosper you, Go! Go! because I am the Lord God Almighty, whom ye are bound to serve, and who is able both to defend his servants, and to crown their labors with success.

We need not listen to Isaiah, as with prophetic finger pointing to the manger at Bethlehem, he exclaims, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." We need not dwell upon the vision that he saw of "the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted, while his train filled the temple, and the seraphims stood and cried one unto another, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory; and then take testimony of John, that it was the glory of Christ that Isaiah saw. We need not study that saying in John's gospel—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made which was made;" and then go and gaze with that same John into the opened heaven, on the heavenly host adoring *God*, and on the company of redeemed men from the earth casting their crowns at his feet, and saying, Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created;" or listen with him to that new song which they sing—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and honor, and blessing." It is enough to see Jesus risen from the dead. In the hour of his last agony, "the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him now deliver him if he will have him; for he said, I am the son of God." Jesus did not come down from the cross. He did more than that. He *died*, and recovered himself from death. He descended into the grave, and returned again. To have come down from the cross would indeed have been a sign which might well have overwhelmed his enemies, and filled them with terrible conviction of his divinity. But that was not the sign which he gave. A more convincing sign was reserved for them, and for the world—even the sign of his resurrection from the dead, the third day, according to his word, declaring him to be the Son of God more mightily than all the miracles he had ever wrought before, and than any miracles, while living, he might have wrought. Oh, had Jesus leaped from that cross to which accursed hands had nailed him,

and assuming all the majesty of the hidden Godhead, smitten with sudden blindness and death that whole throng of brutal soldiery and insulting Jews, and then spurning with indignant foot the polluted earth, ascended through the clouds into heaven, in the sight of all that loved him, and that stood there beholding ; had he done this, would there not have been proof enough that Jesus was very God to convince the world ? But this, my brethren, would have been as nothing to the proof he furnished when, " having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be holden by it," he cleaved asunder the tomb, and came forth, and stood again in the midst of his disciples ; as nothing to the proof they saw, when he came, the doors being shut where they were assembled, " and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you," and then bade the incredulous Thomas, " Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands : and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side : and be not faithless, but believing ;" to whom Thomas answered and said, " My Lord and my God ;" as nothing to the proof they saw when he stood by them, and spoke with them then in that mountain, where, before he suffered, he appeared to show himself unto them ; as nothing to the proof which they beheld in Olivet.

YES! JESUS IS GOD. It is God who says, " And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

In this very utterance, my brethren, Jesus proclaims himself to be God, for it is nothing less than a *divine grace* which he announces.

II. We may consider *to whom* Jesus speaks ; surely not to the eleven as such ; not to the eleven as men hasting to die, and to leave no inheritors of the promised grace ; but to them as disciples, representing a succession of disciples never to be ended while the world stands. He speaks to his own servants present and future, living and to live in endless generations. The terms of announcement settle this matter for us.

Neither are we to understand the address of our Lord, as directed in such an exclusive sense, to the eleven as *apostles*, or as distinguished officially in any way from other disciples, as to lay on them the sole responsibility of the service which he had just exacted, or as to limit to them the grace which he now vouchsafes to pledge. Indeed there is much good reason for supposing that the eleven were not alone with Jesus when the words were uttered, but that this manifestation of himself was the identical one mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 6, at which it is said, " he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once." Some even have conjectured that there was at this time a general gathering of all those who at this early period had embraced the Christian faith. If this were so, then it was really the *church*, in the largest and most complete sense of that term, that Jesus had before him when he spoke.

True enough this is all uncertain. It cannot positively be affirmed that there was a soul with him in that mountain save the eleven. Let it be so. Let it be that he spoke to the eleven alone, as apostles and ministers. In part, it is very evident that his address had respect to them only, in their official character; yet it was to them, as ministers of his church, as leaders and guides of the entire body of his people. It was to them as representing the church in whose name they were to act, and with whom they were to be identified in all their labors. They stood before him as the present embodiment of the church in all ages. As such he laid on them his command, and as such he gave to them his promise.

If, in some sense, the promise may be regarded as made especially to Christ's ministers engaged in their peculiar work as such, it is equally to be regarded nevertheless as made to all his disciples living and laboring for him. The promise must be looked upon as coextensive with the command, and it would be quite idle for me to consume your time with showing that the command, in some aspects at least of the duty which it imposes, reaches to every disciple—to every member of that body of Christ, which is the church—not to the head and to the hands only, but also to the feet.

It is to the church that Jesus speaks. But to the church in what aspect? To the church in what attitude and what relation? To the church when, and where, and what doing? To the church always? To the church absolutely and unconditionally. To the church doing what she will, and seeking what ends may please her!

"Jesus came and spake unto them saying: All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

It is not then to the church absolutely and unconditionally—not to the church doing what she pleases, and seeking what ends she may propose unto herself; not to the church always, in any case—but to the church in an aspect well defined, and in an attitude and a relation clearly specified and described; to the church *doing her Lord's will—doing the commandment*, that the promise is accorded, "*Go ye therefore, and disciple all nations, and lo, I am with you always.*"

Suppose, my brethren, that the church of the Redeemer were utterly to turn away from that distinct and specific work which he has given her to do. Suppose that instead of going and discipling all nations, she should just content herself with occupying and strengthening the position in the world which she has already acquired—with adorning and beautifying her present posses-

sions, and with making herself more august and dignified in the sight of men in the limited sphere to which her existence is now confined. Suppose she were to conclude that in the way of extension she had done already enough—that the Gospel had been preached far enough, and that as for the nations now sitting in darkness, for her, they might sit there still and forever, for she would do no more—she would cultivate the ground she had, and leave the deserts to their desolation. Suppose this, and where then would be the promise? When there was no longer any church in the world going and discipling all nations, whose would the promise be, and who might take its consolations?

If, when Jesus was ascended into heaven, the church of the first disciples had said: Now “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ,”—we will rejoice and be glad in him, for the salvation which he hath brought unto us, and here in Jerusalem, and in all Judea will we proclaim his grace and make disciples in his name, but we will not go discipling all nations—we will not leave our pleasant homes, and the green fields of our native land—we will not venture among the rude and barbarous peoples. Here will we stay, and here shall the church be glorious. Had they said so, and done so, then whose would have been the promise? Not theirs. Who on earth might have claimed it? No man. The promise is to *the church discipling all nations*—to the church distinctly and specifically so employed, and employed no otherwise. It is to no self-seeking or self-glorifying, or self-saving church, and it is to no home-abiding church, but to a church spreading herself abroad, seeking the glory of Christ and the extension of his kingdom, and the salvation of the world.

The church of Jesus Christ has her own distinct and peculiar mission to perform. He has given her her work to do. He has defined her vocation, and assigned her her proper business. She is to conquer the world for him. She is by the Gospel to subdue all nations to the obedience of the faith. She is to go forth in his name and with his word to make disciples of all men. From this work she is not at liberty to turn aside, or in it ever to rest. She must subordinate it to nothing, but all things else to it. To bring in Christ's universal kingdom, to fill the earth with the knowledge of him as the waters cover the sea, to make His name glorious in every place and a sound of joy to every ear, that is the great and paramount end of her being and continuance here upon the earth. She would be no church of Jesus Christ out of this relation. She would be an army of aliens, and a synagogue of Satan. A definition of the church, was given by our Lord himself when he said, “Ye are the light of the *world*, a city that is set on a hill *cannot* be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth

light unto all that are in the house." And Christ's own sense of what his church would be, departing from his design respecting her, is expressed when having described her as "the salt of the earth," he said: "But if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

No, my brethren, our blessed Lord does not say—"And lo, I am with you always," to any church but one going forth to battle for him against the irreligion, and unbelief, and idolatrous superstitions of the whole world. He says it to a church in arms for him against all the powers of the kingdom of darkness in the earth. He says it as the great captain of salvation to the host of his elect gathered for the subjugation of all his foes. It is distinctly in view of the universal battle-field—in view of the enemy to be encountered—in view of the tumults and the toils, and the terrors of that strife which has for its object nothing less than the conquest of all nations for him, that he says, Go, and I am with you always. It is not, *stay*, and I am with you, but *go*, and I am with you. It is not, Do what you will, and I am with you; but Go, fight for me—Go, plant the standard of my cross on every land and on every island. Go, subdue the whole earth in my name, "And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

In the very aim and essence of her being, the church is a missionary church, a church militant against the whole empire of darkness in the world, designed and fashioned by her Lord for aggressive and onward movement, for conflict and conquest, and that unceasingly till a final and complete victory shall be obtained. For this great and glorious object the church exists, and it is only with reference to it, and to the exigencies of her unavoidable state in connexion with it, that the promise of my text is given to her.

Would, my brethren, that this were better understood. Would to God, that the entire church could be made to realize the fact, that there is no promise of the gracious presence of her Lord in the midst of her, only as she is actually employed in her proper work, moving on to take possession of the earth for him.

III. We are to consider the promise. *What does Jesus say?*

We have seen that the promise is made to the church discipling all nations. It is made to the church engaged in an enterprise which, even to this day she has upon her hands, and which is to occupy her energies in all future time. It is not, therefore, the promise of a grace which was soon and suddenly to terminate, leaving the church in the very midst of her labors and her wants, but of a grace which was to continue as long as the exigency should continue which created the necessity for it, "even unto the end of the world."

Literally, as you are aware, the reading from the Greek is—to the end of the age—or, to the finishing of the dispensation, or of the time ; which some, regarding the promise as made especially to our Lord's first disciples, and as relating to those miraculous powers with which they were to be endowed, have understood to refer to their life-time, or to the period about to terminate with the destruction of Jerusalem and the dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth.

Evidently, however, the age intended by our Lord, was that in which his Gospel was to be preached ; in which the work was to be done which he had just laid by commandment on his church, and with reference to which the promise of his gracious presence was given to her. It was the age in which all nations were to be disciplined, in which the church was to be passing through the conflicts and perils of her militant state. It is, therefore, *the end of the world*, strictly and properly speaking, that is meant. So far, the promise extends. Jesus declares that he will be with his obedient church through the entire period of her warfare, until time shall end, and her militant shall be exchanged for her triumphant state.

And, brethren, I am not well satisfied with that word, "*always*," in the text. It presents its idea too comprehensively and massively. I like far better the literal and exact rendering of the original—*All ages*. It is not for us, with this promise in our hands, to be looking off to the end of the world, and blessing ourselves with the assurance that the gracious presence of our Lord is to be with us even until then ; but we are joyfully to recognize the absolute coincidence of the promised grace with each intervening space. We are not to cast our thoughts onward to the final consummation, and expect that Jesus will be with us until that is reached, but we are to think of each successive day that is to elapse before that final day shall come, and expect that Jesus will be with us *each day*. We are to look upon the church in her continual march, through all her vicissitudes of conflict and danger, going not alone *any day*, but *all days*, accompanied, and guided, and prospered by her Almighty Lord.

"And lo! *I am with you*." Brethren, what is that? In what sense does Jesus promise to be *with* his faithful and obedient Church? There is no difficulty in understanding him. As it is said, "And the Lord was *with* Joseph, and he was a prosperous man," so is the promise of our Lord, "Lo, I am with you," and ye shall *prosper* in the work which I have given you to do. Ye shall have success in it. Ye shall triumph gloriously, and in due time, "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

1. I am with you in sympathy and in desire. My heart is with

you. O, blessed Jesus! can there ever be a doubt of this in the minds of any of thy people? Can we ever question with ourselves, as we go forth obeying thy command to disciple the nations, whether on thy throne thou rememberest us, and carest for us, and hast delight in our work? We know that thou art with us, and that no heart in all the universe like thine own is concerned for the enterprise which thou hast committed to our hands. Is not Jesus with us, my brethren? Is he not with us in our counsels? Is he not with us in our prayers? Is he not with us in our labors? Is he not with us in every thought we think, in every word we speak, in every act we do for him, for the furtherance of his cause and the upbuilding of his kingdom? Whose servants are we? Are we not *his* servants? Whose work are we performing? Is it not his work? Whose kingdom are we seeking to promote? Is it not his kingdom? and is not *he* with us? He, of all the beings on earth or in heaven, is the being whom we should suspect last of all of not being with us. Nay, whomsoever else we might suspect of looking with indifference or with feeble interest on the work in which we are engaged, he is the being on whom suspicion in this regard can never fall. Men may fail us: the kings and the princes of this world may look on us in our gospel work with unconcern, or even with hostile eyes. Professed friends may prove treacherous and deceitful, but there is one higher than all men, higher than all earthly potentates, one friend dearer than all friends, whose fidelity may be trusted forever, and of whose friendly sympathies we never can be deprived—Jesus, with all the capacity of his infinite heart, is with us. He looks down upon us from that height of glory to which he is exalted, and yearns over us, and over the enterprise committed to us, with an interest which no creature, no angel even, can ever fully comprehend.

Why, my dear brethren, we ought not to require the word of our Redeemer's promise to assure us of this. It is enough to know that we have but entered into his labors; for this salvation "first began to be preached by the Lord himself." He inaugurated personally the work in which we are engaged. And think you that the zeal which consumed him consumed itself? Was it quenched amid the agonies and blood of Calvary? Who is he that sits on the throne of heaven but the very same that hung upon the cross? The very same that, by the shedding of his blood, was made "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world?" the very same who, after His resurrection from the dead, in one of his appearances to his disciples, when they doubted and were amazed before him, supposing that it was a spirit and not his real self that they beheld, after he had persuaded them by infallible signs, "opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them—Thus it is written, and thus it behooved

Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem? and now when we go forth preaching that gospel to the nations, and discipling them to its faith, is not *he* with us? Has Jesus forgotten? Has he ceased to care? Oh, Christian brethren, whatever else we doubt, let us never dare to doubt that we have the sympathy of Jesus in our missionary work. It would be impious to question this. Nay, verily, the heart of the Lord is with us.

2. I am with you by my power and by my providence. My *hand* is with you. The sympathy of Christ is not a barren sympathy like the sympathy of some men. It is not his *heart* only that he gives, but his *hand* with it. He pledges to the Church the effectual co-operation of his omnipotence.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations; and lo, I am with you"—with you to defend you against your enemies, to defeat their counsels, and to bring all their devices to nought; with you to strengthen you in every conflict, and to make you victorious; with you to overthrow the mountains and to cast up the valleys, and to make a highway before you in all your goings; with you to make all things work together for your good—to bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, order out of confusion; with you to cause even the wrath of men to serve your purposes, and to restrain the remainder; with you, sometimes indeed "riding on the wings of the wind, making darkness my secret place, and my pavilion round about me, dark waters, and thick clouds of the sky," yet truly with you ordering your paths and developing your conclusions, to make your paths straight, and your conclusions glorious. "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. For I the Lord will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold I will make thee a new threshing instrument having teeth; and thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them, and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel."

Such, brethren, is the promise which Jesus gives. His divine power shall accompany his obedient church, and though weak in herself, she shall be strong in him to do his will.

3. With the assurance of our Lord's everlasting sympathy, and of the effectual help of his Omnipotence, there is included also

the pledge of his *perpetual presence by his Spirit* to enlighten and guide, and comfort and bless his people.

We are not to think of Jesus simply as our infinite friend far distant in the heavens, remembering us there where he sits in glory on his throne, and caring for us, and deeply concerned for our cause ; nor are we to think of him simply as ruling and reigning for our good, overlooking the affairs of his kingdom, and ordering all things with however wise and gracious a reference to our advantage, or with whatever infallible certainty of compassing his ends. We are to understand that by his Spirit, his presence with us is a real presence ; that he is with us in every deed, a God at hand and not afar off, ready with all-sufficient grace to sustain us in every emergency ; to whom we may go in every hour of trial, in every danger and every distress, in all our perplexities and our fears, just the same as if he were *personally* with us and we beheld him with our eyes. "If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth ; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you."

It is no figure, my brethren, that Jesus says to us—"Lo, I am with you," but he speaks plainly. It is even so. The Lord is with his people.

4. Is it not also, somewhat in the way of *warning* that Jesus speaks ? Is there not a caution in his words ? Do we not see a finger of faithful admonition lifted towards us when he says—"All power is given to me. Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you always ?" Are we not reminded that our labor is to be performed under the ceaseless inspection of his eye ? Does he not seem to be telling us of that solemn office which appertains to him as the searcher of hearts, and the trier of the reins ? Does he not seem to be purposely directing our thoughts to that day when he will judge his servants, and render to every one according to his works ?

"And lo, I am with you." O, my soul, receive the comfort of this assurance ; and O, my soul, be not unmindful of the warning. Jesus is with thee in the faithful remembrance and unfailing sympathies of His infinite heart. Jesus is with thee by His all-conquering and untiring power. Jesus is with thee by His comforting and guiding Spirit ; and Jesus is with thee, also, by His searching and trying eye. As thy Master, he is with thee, to think on thee and to care for thee ; to help thee and to uphold thee ; to instruct thee, and to bless thee ; and, in the end, to Judge thee and to reward thee.

IV. Let us consider, very briefly, in conclusion, the practical influence which these words of Jesus should have upon our minds, and—

1. As it respects our judgment of the *sum* of Christian duty here upon the earth. Ten thousand duties demand our attention and our diligence—everywhere there is labor to be performed : labor on ourselves, and labor on other men ; labor in the church, and labor in the world, and labor in our own families. But, the one end of all labors—the sum of all duties—is to speed on the conquest of the world for Christ. Nothing is duty which does not tend to this. Nothing is great, or glorious, or good, which does not serve directly or indirectly to hasten it. He is no disciple of Jesus who is not living for it. He is no disciple of Jesus, with whom all things else are not subordinated to it. This is the end comprehending all ends at which we are to aim. It is the end for which Jesus reigns on His mediatorial throne, and for which He is ceaselessly directing all the energies of His kingdom ; and it is the end to which should be directed all the energies of His church on earth.

We must look upon the world as a revolted empire of God's dominions, and upon the Church of Christ as an army organized and established within its borders for the resubjection of it to its rightful Lord. In this view, a thousand things are, indeed, imperative on the Church, not directly tending to the accomplishment of her great object. She must care for herself and for her camp. She must nurture herself, and husband her resources. She must strengthen and make sure the positions she has already taken, and multiply, in every direction, the arms and sinews of her war. She must train her soldiers, and raise up and prepare the men who are to be leaders of her host ; but she must do all these things with reference solely to her greater efficiency as an army of aggression and conquest. She must never look upon herself as doing her proper work—as fulfilling her proper mission—only when she is casting forward her bands of fighting men, and taking possession of new ground in her great Commander's name. She is doing nothing, in fact, when she is not advancing her arms against the foe. Nothing, when she is not spreading herself out on the enemy's territory, and subduing, and annexing it. Nothing, when she is not "enlarging the place of her tent, and stretching forth the curtains of her habitations." The cry of the host must be forever, *Onward !* They that lead must cry it to them that follow ; and they that follow must cry it to them that lead ; and from front to rear, from rear to front, cry must meet cry, *Onward ! onward !* until the last enemy has been met, and the last foot of earth has been subjected.

2. In the second place, courage, my brethren ! courage ! Think who is upon our side. Think who it is that says, "And lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." "The Lord of hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our refuge." And hear

ye the word of the Lord : " Be still and know that I am God ; I will be exalted among the heathen ; I will be exalted in the earth."

" Oh clap your hands all ye people ; shout unto God with the voice of triumph :

" For the Lord most high is terrible ; He is a great king over all the earth.

" He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

" He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom He loved.

" God is gone up with a shout ; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

" Sing praises unto God, sing praises ; sing praises unto our king, sing praises :

" For God is the king of all the earth ; sing ye praises with the understanding.

" God reigneth over the heathen ; God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

" The princes of the people are gathered together even the people of the God

Abraham :

" For the shields of the earth belong unto God ; He is greatly exalted."

There is no fear but we shall conquer in this war, for " if the Lord be for us, who can be against us ? Let

" The kings of the earth set themselves,

" And the rulers take counsel together,

" Against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying,

" Let us break their bands asunder,

" And cast away their cords from us.

" He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh.

" The Lord shall have them in derision."

Oh, my brethren, sometimes we are tempted to despond. Sometimes looking at the feebleness of all human resources, and at the magnitude of the enterprise in which we are engaged, we are ready even to despair. But alas, for us ! Alas, for our blindness and our folly ! Like Elisha's servant in Dothan, when he saw the " horses and the chariots and the great host " which the King of Syria had sent up to take Elisha, but could not see that " the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about him " for his defence, who cried, in his terror, " Alas, my Master ! how shall we do ? " So we often are at our wit's end, and can see no way of deliverance before us. Oh, could our eyes be opened when we are thus perplexed, as the eyes of Elisha's servant were when Elisha prayed for him, what wonders should we behold ! Should we not see " the chariots of God which are twenty thousand—even thousands of angels, and the Lord among them as in Sinai ? " More than Israel saw in the wilderness—more than the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, should our eyes behold. Even Jesus and the host of His mighty ones encamping round about us.

Let us arm ourselves with the strength of this assurance. Let us be " Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." " Be strong, O Zerubbabel, with the Lord ; be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest ; and be strong, all ye people of the land, and work : for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts."

Finally there should abide with us continually all the weight of that solemn admonition which our text conveys. A holy fear should take possession of our minds ; for oh, the Lord is here,

and the Lord's eyes are looking on us! How we should cleanse ourselves and keep ourselves from every evil thing!—How humble should we be; how devoted, and how earnest in our Master's cause. How watchful against everything that can be offensive in his sight, and how faithful and courageous and steadfast in doing his will!

We need not be told to stimulate us in the warfare to which we have been called, that the centuries are looking down upon us, or that the eyes of the world are turned towards us. A mightier thought than was ever invoked on battle-fields to inflame the ardor of men rushing to any carnal strife, should rouse and animate our souls. Jesus is here, and the eyes of Jesus are beholding us!

We are indeed a spectacle with angels and with men, but this is little in comparison with the fact that we are living and acting day by day, under the eyes of him who loved us and gave himself for us, and who so soon shall sit in judgment on our works. Oh let us carry this word of Jesus—*Lo, I am with you*, wherever we go, whatever we do. At home, abroad, preaching, praying, giving, counselling together, toiling any where, any hour for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, let it ring upon our ears and penetrate our hearts. *Lo, I am with you*. Let it strengthen our courage, let it inflame our zeal, and constrain all the affections of our souls, until that blessed day shall come when, having been with us on earth, and found us faithful, he shall admit us to be with him, and behold his glory in his kingdom.

SERMON DCCXIX.

BY REV. RUFUS W. CLARK,

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

CHRISTIANS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

"Ye are the light of the world."—MATTHEW v. 14.

TRUTH from the lips of the Saviour comes decorated with all the beauties of nature. His teachings are never dry, arrogant or scholastic. He does not speak merely for effect, does not gratify idle curiosity, does not seize great occasions, for all occasions or opportunities for imparting instruction are great, whether one person or a thousand persons are present. Truth flows from him as the pure stream flows from the fountain, winding around the

hills, through quiet valleys, and over the extended plain. The light of nature and the light of revelation seem to meet and blend in the person of Jesus. His doctrines have floated down to us over the stream of time, embodied in images, similes and parables of exquisite beauty. The morning light, the evening sky, the fowls of the air, grass of the field, lilies of the valley, mountain summits, vineyards, pools, gardens, are the decorations of his theology, the alphabet of his instructions. His teachings, too, are baptized in the element of sympathy. They are alive with affection. He speaks from the heart to the heart. Hence he is adapted not to a select few, but to all classes, climes and ages. The schools of philosophy and the humble peasant, the prince upon his throne and the inmate of the cottage alike sit at his feet. He holds no monopoly of learning, creates no aristocracy, acknowledges no privileged classes. The dividing wall between Jew and Gentile he breaks down. The arrogance of a haughty priesthood he spurns and tramples under foot. The icy framework of formalism he shatters into a thousand pieces. False religions are in his sight whited sepulchres. Hypocrisy is his detestation. His words are revolutionary. His doctrines are more potent than empires, have survived empires, will make of the whole earth one vast empire.

He so speaks, too, that while addressing his disciples, he seems to be addressing us. The lapse of eighteen centuries does not detract one iota from the freshness and power of his words. What he meant for those who listened with the outward ear, he meant for all his disciples of every age and country. And succeeding generations will hear his words, will pass them from one to another, until they strike the generation that will, under the pressure of the past, execute his purposes and fulfil his prophetic utterances.

In defining the position, duties and responsibilities of his disciples, Christ uses various images, among which one of the most appropriate and beautiful is that which we have selected for our text. This Christian is denominated the light of the world. Let us trace the analogy.

In the first place, light exists not for itself, but for beings endowed with the power of vision. Its mission is one of pure benevolence. It is one of the most beautiful emblems of benevolence that exists; for it lives for all mankind, exerts its power for all sentient beings, shines upon all worlds, upon mountains, hills, valleys and plains. It paints every object with beauty, spreads over the universe pictures and scenery of exquisite loveliness. It is the royal artist, commissioned by the great King to adorn his palace, grounds, empire. The commission it holds, bears the royal signet. Of all the physical elements there is none that so awakens my curiosity and enthusiasm as light. Its nature philosophers cannot describe to me. Some say that it consists of

minute, luminous particles. Others speak of it as the product of undulations in the atmosphere, or in the subtle ether supposed to pervade all space. It is as full of mystery as of beauty, and the mystery increases as I endeavor to trace my consciousness of the element. We say that the light falls upon the pupil of the eye, thence travels along the nerve of light and reaches the brain, the seat of consciousness. Then that which seems to be around me, is really within me. The stars, that appear to be in the Heavens, are luminous spots upon my brain. The landscape is a series of minute pictures hung in the chambers of the soul. All that we call vision is only a process of daguerreotyping. The atmosphere is full of these floating images, and we catch them on the nerve of light, as they are caught upon the plate of the daguerreotypist. Multiply the plates to any extent, and you catch an equal number of these fugitive images. Multiply the spectators to any extent, and the vision of each is a faithful plate, and memory gives permanency to the impression. I do not wonder that pagans, without a knowledge of the author of light, have worshipped the sun. If there is a possible excuse for any idolatry, there is excuse for this.

But though light is not a deity, nor a conscious agent, yet it seems almost to have a moral nature, or at least a moral influence. It is a promoter of virtue, as darkness is the promoter of vice. Whether under ordinary circumstances those living on the sunny side of a street are more virtuous than those living on the shady side, we will leave for neighbors to decide. But it is a well established fact, that in dim, poorly lighted and ventilated apartments, there are the seeds of vice. From such come the materials for New York mobs, midnight incendiaries, thieves and assassins.

Light, too, though not inspired, is the revealer of natural religion. It renders visible the objects that teach us and all mankind the invisible attributes of the Deity. It is the flame that perpetually burns upon the altar of natural religion, burns to light the nations in the pathway to happiness and glory. And here the analogy to the Christian is marked and apparent. The Christian, like the light, exists not for himself. The very essence of Christianity is doing good to others. Its law is the law of benevolence. The unchristian heart is bound up in selfishness. Wealth and honors are sought for personal gratification. The plans, pursuits, toils of life, all revolve around one common centre. The doors of the mind are opened only to guests that bring gifts to lay upon the altar of self. Approach such a man, and before he will look upon you, he must put on the spectacles of a sordid, exclusive, monopolising self-interest. If he can make anything out of you, use you or your friends for any private ends, he will assume the garb of friendship, be polite, show attention. If you cannot contribute to him; if there are no points where you and his selfishness touch, then you are no more to him than a block or

a stone. To contribute to your happiness he would not so much as lift a finger. Were your life in danger, perhaps he might start; but he would be moved as much by a desire to save his own reputation as your life. You have met with such persons in your business transactions. I have met with such: men who impart no more light than comes from the dim phosphorescence on the dry wood of a rotten tree. A thousand of them, put together, are not equal even to one candle, and that hid under a bushel.

Then, there is another class, referred to by the inspired writer when he says, "The way of the wicked is as darkness." Their vices, crimes, infidelity, atheism, constitute the world's night, often a night without a single star visible. Such men are the clouds that overshadow the nations, the fog that rises up, and obscures the landscape, and hides all objects of beauty and sublimity. They constitute the moral pestilence that walketh in darkness. They serve to keep alive the principle of moral evil. If they have any light, it is only such as the midnight thief carries in a dark lantern.

Now Christianity enters the soul to dissipate this darkness, to renovate the moral faculties, to render the whole soul luminous with virtue and holiness, that it may shine. "The entrance of thy word," says the Psalmist, "giveth light." Selfishness is dethroned, and benevolence occupies the seat of power. The converted, illumined soul, lives not for itself, but for others. It has risen from the low marsh of sordid desire and base selfishness, and ascended towards the heavens where it can be seen.

And the amount of light that a Christian sheds around him is a fair criterion of the amount of genuine religion in the soul. If the flame is there, its rays will be seen, and it is one's duty not only to let his light shine, but to hold up the torch of a holy influence, that its light may be seen as far as possible. Too many shed simply a reflected light. They are more like the moon than the sun. How should we get along with our business, with study, with the crops, if we had only moon-light? How rapidly will the gospel progress among the nations if there is only moon-light shed from the church?

Some persons occasionally appear very brilliant. They will attract attention as the fire-works on the Fourth of July. But who would think of lighting the world by pyrotechnic exhibitions? Were this our sole reliance for light, what pyrotechnist would take the contract? The necessities of the moral world are precisely those of the physical world. To roll the moral darkness from the earth, the sun, the church must shine. It must shine from an elevated position, encircling the nations with its brilliancy and splendor.

In the next place, the analogy between light and the Christian holds in respect to purity. Of all the natural elements what can compare with the light for purity. Water, air and other elements

upon which life depends, may become impure ; but who ever heard of impure light ? It may become dim, may gradually fade away, but the quality remains unchanged. Though the light shines upon all objects, upon the diamond and carrion, upon the garden of roses and the marshy fen, still it retains its purity. It does not in the least partake of the nature of the objects upon which it shines. Indeed, from the very character of its office, light must be pure : for how else could it render visible the material objects by which we are surrounded. Were the ocean perfectly pure and transparent, all the objects at its bottom, aquatic plants, coral formations, as well as the fishes that play in its waters, might be clearly seen. But the least impurity gives to a large body of water, where the depth is great, the appearance of an opaque substance. The ocean of light, however in which the earth is bathed, is not simply transparent, but is the very essence of purity. And it seems to struggle to impart its purity to every object upon which it rests. It paints the distant landscape in pure and attractive colors. It tips each wave with golden rays, and strews the ruffled lake with sparkling diamonds. If the lake is at rest it makes it a mirror, reflecting the shore, the heavens, clouds, birds. Even the particles of dust that arise and float in its beams, are converted into minute stars.

Equally is purity the essence of the Christian heart, the substance of the moral light that emanates from a holy example. It cannot be counterfeited, any more than the earth can be lighted by a false sun in the heavens. A sham Christian is as impossible as a sham Universe. How is the law of gravitation to act upon the mere semblance of planets ? How can the sun keep up the appearance of shining, if there is no real fire in the orb ? Hypocrisy may accomplish its ends for a season, but in the long run it is sure to reveal itself. It will come out in the countenance, in the discovered motive, in the private transaction. Everything is against it, in nature, in providence, in the circumstances of daily life. A thousand vigilant police are on its track. It is with this as with vice. A forcible writer says : "The league between virtue and nature engages all things to assume a hostile front to vice. The beautiful laws and substances of the world persecute and whip the traitor. He finds that things are arranged for truth and benefit, but there is no den in the wide world to hide a rogue. Commit a crime, and the earth is made of glass. Commit a crime, and it seems as if a coat of snow fell on the ground, such as reveals in the woods the track of every partridge, squirrel and mole. You cannot recall the spoken word, you cannot wipe out the foot-track, you cannot draw up the ladder, so as to leave no inlet or clue. Some revealing circumstance always transpires. The laws and substances of nature—water, snow, wind, gravitation—become penalties to the thief." So with the false in any department or profession. If the character is only a shell or an appearance, it will in the end pass for only what it is worth. If there is a lie in

it, it will not. It cannot be kept as a prisoner in the dungeon. It will look through its iron gratings. It will, at some time, be heard. It will one day scale the wall. There is as much difficulty in one's shining without purity and integrity as there was in the five foolish virgins making their lamps burn in which there was no oil.

But with these elements everything helps the Christian. All laws, tendencies, providences, are his friends. Other minds are mirrors that reflect his light. His enemies, fearing that he may pour too much light upon iniquities that have ripened into institutions, strive to put it out. But their efforts only add fuel to the flame. The more they try to extinguish it, the higher it flames up. Every screen they raise to keep off the light becomes a powerful reflector of its rays. Not a few Christian heroes have been indebted to their enemies for rendering their light eminently conspicuous. Every note of alarm has been a trumpet tone, to call the multitude together to gaze upon the new luminary that has appeared in the moral heavens. As the incoming waves and tide raise the light ship, and thus enable the beacon to be seen at a greater distance, so the tide of popular indignation raises the moral light and causes its beams to extend over a wider sphere.

In the next place Christians are the light of the world, because they are the source of the beautiful in character, virtue, and holiness. Without light, what conception could we have of the beautiful in nature, of the variety in colors,—of the exquisite combinations of light and shade in natural scenery. When the sun and stars are invisible, and we look out upon the darkness, all variety and beauty are lost in the intense gloom. A vivid imagination fills the deserted streets with midnight robbers and assassins—fills the black, mourning forest with wild beasts—fills the air with evil spirits. The door is hastily shut against the intense gloom, and we return, with thrills of joy, to the bright fireside. Night is the funeral of nature. The landscape—the beauty of flowers—the songs of birds seem entombed. The sighing of the winds is the funeral dirge. I do not wonder that many flowers close up as the sun sinks below the horizon, unwilling to waste their beauties upon the darkness. But on the return of the morning sun, they then open their arms to welcome his beams. The forests, mountains, valleys emerge from the darkness and seem almost created anew. Thus light is the source of beauty—the artist of nature. It makes of the whole universe a picture gallery through which the nations walk; where, according to the degree of taste and culture in the spectators, the mind is filled with delight and admiration.

Equally true is it that the church—I mean the living, genuine, shining church—is the source of moral beauty. There is found the beauty of holiness—of benevolence—of humanity and love. The beauty here is twofold in the character itself, and in the

effects of that character upon others. What is more attractive than holiness? What more highly adorns the soul? What renders it more Godlike? Here is true spiritual light filling the whole soul as the rays of the sun fill the solar system, rendering luminous all the moral faculties, producing harmony, faith, and love. Its fruits are as numerous as those of the spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, truth.

Then there is the beauty of benevolence, which is an ornament to any character—which makes man like his Creator. It clothes his existence with new splendor and new power. He feels the incoming of Divinity in his soul, and is made conscious of faculties and beauties which before were hid in the darkness of sin. He is like one entering a dark cavern with a torch, and is surprised and delighted by the sparkling stalactics, glistening gems, and scenes of enchantment that open upon his vision. One department seems arched with the most brilliant and costly decorations. Another is supported by columns of the most exquisite and beautiful workmanship. Another resembles a temple filled with the spirit of worship. Another is lined with galleries, as though assemblies of spirits gathered there for counsel and eloquence. In one is a pool—in another a lake, reflecting all the beauties of walls and ceiling—the whole constituting a world of enchantment in miniature. Let the Christian thus, with the torch-light of truth, explore his soul, and he will make fresh discoveries with every advancing step. More than stalactic splendors will burst upon his view. He will discover mines of riches which he had no conception were in his possession. He will perceive that he is examining that upon which the highest Divine skill has been expended—that which bears the nearest resemblance to the Deity. This internal world will seem more beautiful and attractive than the external—more abundant in its resources—rich in its treasures—potent in its forces.

But it is mainly in its influences on society that the beauty of this moral light is seen. Christ speaks of the church as the salt of the earth as well as the light of the world. It is the preserving as well as the producing power. It saves the race from utter apostasy. It prevents the darkness of heathenism from becoming universal. We speak not now of a formal church—of a dead church: not of a denomination, but of the church universal and spiritual, of which Christ is the living Head, whose names are not on church records, simply, but are written in the book of life. And this not only preserves the good, but extends it. It is the source of civilization, national prosperity, free institutions, social blessings. As the light and heat of the sun produce the crops, which are the only real wealth of a nation—which create the commerce, build cities, start the wheels and spindles of the factory, give impetus to all departments of industry, so the moral light of the church produces the institutions which give prosperity and

favor to a nation. It purifies the literature, secures honesty and integrity as the basis of business transactions ; establishes courts of justice, plants freedom, gives sacredness to domestic ties.

Compare the nations upon which this light shines, with those destitute of it. Who hold the national power ? Who work the great agencies of nature ? Who send ships to all climes ? books to all tribes and tongues ? missionaries to every continent and to the islands of the sea ? How many thousands walk in this light who will not acknowledge its source ! What multitudes every day reap its temporal benefits, who deride its authors ! How many refuse to enter Christian churches, which, in reality, are beacon lights that have saved them from utter shipwreck, and now keep them from a state of barbarism ! As God causes the sun to shine and the rain to descend upon the just and the unjust, so he causes this moral light to bless all classes—to pour its radiance over vast continents and attract millions to the glorious hopes of the Gospel.

Finally, as the natural light is formed of the various prismatic colors ; which, together form the pure white light, so the influence of the church is the combination of various gifts ; which, together, constitute its unity and its power. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ. However we differ in gifts, in station, in duties, we are still one ; still have one Lord, one faith, one hope, and one captain. And we have one work before us ; one great and glorious mission. It is contained in the commandment, "Let your light so shine before men that others, seeing your good work, may be led to glorify your Father who is in Heaven.

The intellect was created as much to shine as the sun was : and benevolence, purity, love to God and man will bring art its light. The heroes of the past shine down upon us from the heights of glorious influence, producing perpetual day. Their suns never set. Their light is never dimmed. According to their several gifts, they influence and benefit different minds. Each is the centre of a system. From multitudes who have professed the Christian name, we have received no light. There are some stars said to be so distant and obscure that their light has never reached us. There are many in the church whose light has never reached us, and, probably, never will.

It is for us to decide whether we will add new stars to the moral firmament or allow our influence to be lost in darkness—whether we will waste our power, or pursue a career which will be like the shining light—shining brighter and brighter into the perfect day.

THE ELOQUENCE OF ST. PAUL.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."—ACTS xxvi. 28.

This passage unfolds the grand secret of this great apostle's eloquence. It shows us the *end* and the *power* of his oratory. It made it *Pertinent, Practical, Persuasive*.

I. It made it *pertinent*. He always spoke to the point. Of course his oratory is as various as the several occasions on which it was displayed. In order to attain his grand object, he knew it was necessary to adapt his style and manner to the condition of his hearers.

II. The apostle's object made his discourses *practical*. It has been justly remarked, that the preaching of St. Paul, more than that of any other apostle, was *doctrinal*. His great learning—his profound and discriminating intellect—as well as his inspired wisdom, qualified him for this.

III. The apostle's object made his eloquence *persuasive*. It would have this effect in two ways—*indirectly* by its influence on himself, and *directly*, by its own weight and solemnity on the minds of his hearers.

1. It had an influence on himself. It summoned and concentrated all the energies of his intellect, gave weight and stability to his judgment, interest to his countenance, earnestness to his gestures, and deep feeling to his utterance; imparting to his whole demeanor, an indescribable significancy. Every look, every gesture, would be as another tongue speaking things unutterable.

2. It would have a direct influence on the minds of others. The end for which he spoke, as we have seen, was not to *amuse* but to *save* his hearers. The object which actuated the apostle in bringing forward all the great truths and doctrines of revelation, rendered them doubly solemn and affecting.

The doctrine of human depravity, for instance, when presented not with a view to make out a system of divinity, but for the clear purpose of making men *feel* their depravity, and thus to lead them to the Saviour, would come home with dreadful interest. They would not probably retire extolling the preacher, or congratulating themselves on account of their orthodoxy; but *condemning* themselves on account of their sins.

Such was the devotion of the apostle to his object, that it could not be concealed. He compels you to look to the end he is pursuing, and not at him. This rises and is magnified, till it fills the mental vision, and you know not, and care not, by whose instrumentality the image is presented. It seems not to be *St. Paul*, but the *Judgment* which makes Felix tremble. Not *St. Paul*, but his

reasoning, which almost persuades King Agrippa. Not St. Paul, but the *truth* he declared, which made the Jews "cry out and cast off their clothes, and throw dust into the air."

It is true that the highest effect of eloquence is not to be attained by a single trait or characteristic of the speaker; but there is, to say the least, something noble, something truly affecting, to see a great man willing to forget himself; who, in his concern for others, is willing "to impart to them, not the gospel of God only, but his own life also;"—who compels you by his own example to overlook the littleness of private interests, and fix your admiring eyes on scenes momentous as the judgment, and solemn as eternity.

Such is a concise view of the eloquence of St. Paul. If the principles which we have laid down and endeavored to illustrate are correct, we have the foundation for several interesting remarks.

1. We see the reason why so many attend more to the *preacher* than to the *truths* he delivers. Louis XVI. once said to Massillon, "When I hear other preachers, I usually go home *praising them*, but when I hear you, I go home *condemning myself*." It is a lamentable fact, that the preaching of the gospel, which was ordained of God as the instrument of snatching immortal souls from perdition, should be converted into the mere instrument of charming their fancies. O, it is dreadful, to see an assembly of candidates for eternity, sitting for an hour to speculate on the preacher!—to watch his motions, to be delighted only with the melody of his voice, the smoothness and grandeur of his periods, and the sprightly images of his fancy!—and then carelessly retiring from the house of worship, remembering only what they never should have noticed, and praising what perhaps ought rather to be condemned—the *manner* of the preacher! But so it is.

2. We have a good standard of preaching. St. Paul is a model. In him we see what is the legitimate end of the ministry—to persuade men to become reconciled to God. We see, too, the best method of effecting this end. Preaching must be *pertinent*, *practical*, and *persuasive*. To conform to this standard, the minister must adapt his discourses to the condition of his hearers. Some he must win by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, others he must persuade by the terrors of the law. He must be *practical*. He must not preach to amuse himself or his hearers. He may have learning, but he must not preach to display it. He must preach *doctrine*; not as a matter of speculation, nor as a sectary to make proselytes to a party, or a system, but he must bring all his stores of learning, all his science and philosophy, and all the doctrines of revelation, to bear on the point of practice to make men better. And above all, if he would be *persuasive*, he must have his heart in the work. He must feel like St. Paul, "wo is me if I preach not the gospel." He must look forward to that solemn scene, when he will meet them all at the judgment seat, where he and they will receive their final doom.